



The Impact of Digital CRM on Destination Marketing Performance for Manado : The Role of the Informed Tourist as a Mediation Variable

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Abstract : This study investigates the impact of digital Customer Relationship Management (digital CRM) on the destination marketing performance of Manado, Indonesia, with a focus on the mediating role of the informed tourist. In the context of digital advancements, digital CRM represents an opportunity for Manado to enhance relationships, personalize marketing, and increase engagement with potential tourists. The informed tourist—characterized by high engagement with digital sources and reviews—is hypothesized to mediate the relationship between digital CRM and improved destination marketing performance. A quantitative survey administered to recent visitors to Manado, coupled with structural equation modelling analysis, reveals that digital CRM positively influences destination performance and highlights the critical role of informed tourists.

Keywords : Destination Marketing, Indonesia, Informed Tourist, Manado, Tourism Performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Manado, a coastal city in North Sulawesi, Indonesia, known for its marine biodiversity, cultural heritage, and emerging eco-tourism, has gained popularity as a tourist destination. Given the competitive nature of global tourism and the rise of digital engagement, effective destination marketing strategies are crucial for Manado. Digital Customer Relationship Management (digital CRM) enables tourism providers to enhance relationships through personalized communication and engagement. This paper explores how digital CRM can boost Manado's destination marketing performance and examines the mediating role of the informed tourist.

Manado, North Sulawesi, has become a notable destination for international tourists, especially from nearby countries like China, Singapore, Germany, and the United States. Chinese tourists dominate the visitor demographic, accounting for over 60% of international arrivals, largely due to direct flights from China to Manado. This influx has fostered optimism in the local tourism industry, particularly with visa-free entry for many nationalities at Sam Ratulangi Airport

The region offers diverse attractions, including the renowned diving sites around Pulau Lembeh and Bunaken Island, which attract diving and underwater photography enthusiasts worldwide. Land-based attractions like Tomohon's Flower Festival, the scenic Lake Tondano, and the eco-tourism sites in Likupang have also boosted the destination's

appeal. With a growing inventory of hotels and resorts and collaborations with neighboring regions like Sabah, Malaysia, North Sulawesi promotes an integrated tourism experience. Despite these strengths, there are challenges in maintaining consistent tourist arrivals, especially during off-peak seasons. The reliance on Chinese tourists makes the destination vulnerable to shifts in travel patterns or geopolitical tensions. Additionally, limited direct flights from regions outside of East Asia, insufficient tourism infrastructure in less popular areas, and the need for more targeted marketing also pose obstacles. Improvements in infrastructure, diversified marketing strategies, and enhanced international flight options are crucial for broadening Manado's appeal to a wider audience and sustaining growth in foreign tourist arrivals. In 2024, Manado in North Sulawesi continues to experience growth in its tourism sector, but challenges remain in attracting foreign tourists from diverse origins. The number of international visitors saw a significant increase, particularly driven by travellers from China. In July 2024, Manado recorded 4,743 foreign arrivals, a 25.41% increase from the previous year. Chinese visitors comprised the majority, representing over 68% of all foreign tourists. Other key markets included tourists from Germany, Singapore, and the Netherlands

One of the main obstacles Manado faces in broadening its tourist base is the limited number of direct international flights. The local government is actively seeking partnerships to open new flight routes, particularly to popular hubs in Asia and beyond, to facilitate access for more diverse tourist groups. Additionally, though Manado offers many scenic and cultural attractions, infrastructure and support facilities for international tourists could be improved. Investments in language services, international-standard amenities, and marketing campaigns on tourism.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW & HYPOTHESES FORMULATION

Digital CRM in Tourism and Destination Marketing

Digital CRM in tourism involves leveraging online platforms, personalization, and automated customer service to enhance visitor relationships. In destination marketing, digital CRM facilitates targeted communication, personalized offers, and better management of customer feedback (Chatterjee et al., 2022). For Manado, adopting digital CRM can help better address visitor needs and leverage its unique attractions to a global audience (Alrawashdeh & Aljuhmani, 2021).

The research gap between electronic customer relationship management (digital CRM) and destination marketing performance largely revolves around several underexplored areas that recent studies highlight as critical to advancing both theoretical frameworks and practical applications (Almajali et al, 2022; Beritelli et al, 2023).

- a. **Integration of Technological and Behavioral Dimensions:** While digital CRM tools (e.g., personalized digital interactions, data analytics) are increasingly used in destination marketing, research has yet to fully explore how these tools influence consumer behaviors, satisfaction, and trust within diverse cultural contexts. The interplay between technology adoption and customer trust remains essential, especially as privacy concerns grow. Studies recommend that future research examine how different cultural settings influence digital CRM's effectiveness and how varying levels of customer technological readiness affect CRM outcomes, such as satisfaction and loyalty, in the tourism context.
- b. **Impact of Data-Driven Personalization:** Advances in digital CRM enable personalized experiences through data analytics, but there is limited understanding of how such personalization impacts the long-term loyalty and revisit intentions of tourists. While personalization is a core part of digital CRM, research on its specific effects on destination marketing, particularly in terms of customer satisfaction and retention, remains sparse. Future studies could explore these relationships, particularly how privacy and data security affect trust in personalized destination marketing.
- c. **Role of Sustainability in digital CRM Strategies:** As destination marketers are increasingly pressured to adopt sustainable practices, integrating sustainability into digital CRM strategies offers a promising but underexplored research avenue. Studies indicate that tourism destinations are now responding to both environmental concerns and consumer demand for sustainable tourism, but the role of digital CRM in promoting and supporting sustainability efforts is not yet well understood. Researchers suggest that future work could examine how digital CRM tools might support sustainability messaging and influence eco-friendly travel behaviors.
- d. **Methodological Gaps and Theoretical Frameworks:** Although systematic literature reviews using frameworks like ADO (Antecedents-Decisions-Outcomes) and TCM (Theories-Contexts-Methods) have started to map out existing knowledge, gaps persist regarding comprehensive models linking digital CRM practices to destination marketing performance. This includes an exploration of factors such as customer satisfaction, loyalty, and brand perception, and how these variables mediate the

relationship between digital CRM capabilities and performance outcomes in tourism contexts.

- e. **Impact of COVID-19 and Adaptability of digital CRM:** The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the need for digital CRM strategies that respond quickly to crises. Research shows that while many organizations have transitioned to digital platforms, the adaptability of digital CRM systems in times of crisis—along with customer perceptions of digital interactions during these times—remains an open area for research.

Digital CRM Indicators

- a) **Personalization Quality:** This indicator assesses how effectively digital CRM tailors' content to tourists' preferences, using data on past behaviors and interests (Almajali et al., 2022). Personalized interactions improve satisfaction and build trust, which are essential for increasing the amount of relevant information tourists receive.
- b) **Engagement Frequency:** The frequency of digital CRM-driven interactions, such as emails, social media posts, and feedback requests, helps determine how actively a destination is reaching out to potential visitors (Wang et al., 2023). High engagement levels correlate with increased tourist awareness.
- c) **User Experience and Accessibility:** This evaluates how easy it is for tourists to access, navigate, and interact with digital CRM platforms. Accessibility to seamless digital experiences encourages tourists to stay informed about destination options, which positively affects their knowledge and perceptions (Alzubi & Sirani, 2023).
- d) **Data Responsiveness:** This reflects how quickly and effectively digital CRM tools respond to tourist queries or adapt based on real-time feedback, enhancing tourists' knowledge about the destination (Baber et al., 2022).

By addressing these gaps, future studies can provide actionable insights that enhance the alignment of digital CRM functionalities with the complex demands of destination marketing. For instance, integrating theories of trust and satisfaction into digital CRM frameworks in diverse tourism contexts can yield more predictive models of performance and loyalty outcomes in destination marketing. Thus the hypotheses formulation can be formulated as follows:

H1: Digital CRM positively and significantly impacts destination marketing performance for Manado

The Informed Tourist as a Mediating Variable

The informed tourist actively uses digital sources, reviews, and social media, especially for lesser-known destinations like Manado. By interacting with digital CRM initiatives, informed tourists gather valuable information about the destination, influencing their likelihood to visit and recommend Manado to others. Prior studies indicate that informed tourists expect transparency, personalized information, and authentic experiences, which digital CRM can support (Yang & Liu, 2020). Using "informed tourists" as a mediating variable between electronic customer relationship management (digital CRM) and destination marketing performance is gaining traction in recent research. In this context, "informed tourists" refers to tourists who make decisions based on well-sourced, quality online information. These tourists can serve as a bridge between digital CRM efforts such as targeted communications, personalized recommendations, and customer feedback systems and the overall success of destination marketing, as they are empowered to share positive feedback and experiences.

A growing body of literature emphasizes that the quality of online tourism information directly shapes a tourist's perception and connection with a destination. High-quality, accessible information can enhance a tourist's cognitive and emotional response to a location, often framed in recent research as a resonance. This resonance fosters both emotional connections to the destination and influences actual visitation intentions, suggesting that when tourists are well-informed, their satisfaction increases, which can lead to improved destination performance outcomes. For instance, studies highlight that quality information shared through social media and other digital CRM tools significantly impacts the destination's image and e-reputation, ultimately enhancing destination marketing efforts by creating informed and motivated visitors (Wang et al., 2023; Baber et al., 2022).

By placing informed tourists as a mediating variable, tourism studies can explore how digital CRM not only directly improves destination performance but also indirectly does so by enhancing tourists' perceptions, satisfaction, and loyalty. Acknowledging informed tourists as an intermediary can help tourism managers to assess which digital CRM strategies most effectively yield improved performance. Additionally, this approach aligns with the broader shift toward personalized, customer-centric digital strategies in tourism marketing, where the quality and relevancy of shared online content become instrumental in shaping tourist behaviour and destination appeal. To further this research, studies could examine diverse digital CRM strategies across different types of destinations

to identify which approaches maximize both tourist knowledge and satisfaction, thereby optimizing destination marketing efforts.

Indicators of “Informed Tourists” as a Mediator

- 1) **Quality of Information Accessed:** This indicator refers to the accuracy, relevancy, and completeness of the information tourists’ access via digital CRM. High-quality information significantly shapes tourists' cognitive and emotional connections to a destination (Wang et al., 2023).
- 2) **Perceived Destination Image:** Informed tourists tend to have a more accurate and favourable perception of a destination's image. Studies using frameworks like the S-O-R (Stimulus-Organism-Response) model indicate that when tourists resonate with quality online content, their perception and satisfaction with the destination improve (Baber et al., 2023)
- 3) **Tourist Engagement with e-Content:** Measured by the frequency with which tourists interact with destination-related content, either through social media or website activity, this indicator reflects how engaged and informed tourists feel about a destination (Frontiers, 2023). Thus the hypotheses formulation can be formulated as follows:

H2: The informed tourist positively impacts destination marketing performance.

Destination Marketing Performance

Destination marketing performance includes outcomes such as tourist satisfaction, repeat visitation, and word-of-mouth referrals. Effective digital CRM can enhance these metrics by improving the tourist experience through tailored recommendations, efficient service, and quick responses to inquiries (Kim et al., 2021). For Manado, digital CRM has the potential to boost its appeal to the informed tourist, translating into higher destination performance (Zhong & Luo, 2019).

Destination Marketing Performance Indicators

- a. **Visitor Loyalty and Revisit Intention:** High digital CRM effectiveness typically correlates with improved tourist loyalty, as informed tourists who enjoy tailored information are more likely to revisit and recommend the destination (Cheng et al., 2020).
- b. **Social media and Word-of-Mouth (WOM) Influence:** Informed tourists who resonate with their experience often share their positive impressions, which boosts organic reach and influences other potential visitors. This is a critical performance indicator in tourism, as WOM has a strong impact on destination reputation (Baber et al., 2023).

- c. **Increased Conversion Rates:** This measures the rate at which digital CRM interactions convert leads into actual visitors. A direct link exists between well-informed tourists and increased booking or visit conversion rates, suggesting a successful digital CRM strategy that enhances destination performance (Frontiers, 2023); (Wismantoro et al., 2023). When effectively aligned, these indicators suggest that digital CRM enhances both the quantity and quality of information available to tourists, thus improving their knowledge and perceptions, which ultimately drives destination marketing success. Thus the hypotheses can be formulated as follows:

H3: The informed tourist significantly mediates the relationship between digital CRM and destination marketing performance.

3. METHODS

Research Design

The study employs a quantitative research approach with a cross-sectional survey, examining how digital CRM efforts affect destination marketing performance in Manado and exploring the role of the informed tourist. Specifically, we investigate whether the informed tourist acts as a mediating variable. The cross-sectional survey design is suitable as it captures data at a single point in time from tourists who have recently visited Manado, allowing us to analyse relationships between digital CRM, informed tourist behaviour, and marketing performance. Convenience sampling was used to recruit respondents, primarily targeting travellers who had interacted with Manado's digital content or customer service channels. The sample included a balanced representation of international and domestic tourists to capture diverse perspectives on digital CRM efficacy and information-seeking behaviour.

Determining Sample Size

A minimum sample size was calculated based on the PLS-SEM method's requirements, which recommends using the "10-times rule" as a basic guideline. This rule suggests that the sample size should be at least 10 times the number of items in the most complex construct (e.g., if the largest construct has 4 indicators, a minimum sample of 40 is required). However, for more robust statistical power, recent literature recommends that sample sizes for PLS-SEM be at least 200 for models with complex mediation. Considering the model complexity and to achieve a confidence level of 95% with a margin of error of $\pm 5\%$, the study targeted 400 responses. After data cleaning, 387 valid responses were retained for analysis.

Data Collection and Sample

Data was collected from a sample of 400 tourists who visited Manado within the past 12 months and interacted with digital CRM platforms such as websites, social media, and review sites. Convenience sampling was used to recruit respondents, primarily targeting travellers who had interacted with Manado's digital content or customer service channels. The sample included a balanced representation of international and domestic tourists to capture diverse perspectives on digital CRM efficacy and information-seeking behaviour. Data was collected using an online structured questionnaire distributed to a sample of 400 tourists who visited Manado in the past 12 months and engaged with digital platforms (such as social media, tourism websites, or online reviews) in relation to their visit.

To ensure respondents were "informed tourists," survey filters ensured that respondents had actively researched their trip using online sources, demonstrating engagement with digital information about Manado's offerings. To gather relevant data, the study targeted tourists who visited Manado within the past 12 months. Respondents were recruited via online travel communities, social media platforms, and partnerships with local tourism organizations in Manado. The convenience sampling method was selected due to the challenges of obtaining a random sample from international and domestic tourists who engage with digital content.

A pre-screening question in the survey ensured that respondents had interacted with digital content about Manado prior to their visit. Respondents were then directed to the survey, which included questions about their experiences with digital CRM tools, information-seeking behaviour, and their overall satisfaction with their visit.

Measures and Variables

- Digital CRM: Evaluated based on personalization, ease of access to information, and responsiveness.
- Informed Tourist: Assessed through information-seeking behavior, frequency of digital engagement, and trust in online information.
- Destination Marketing Performance: Measured by tourist satisfaction, willingness to recommend, and likelihood to revisit Manado.

Measures and Instrument Design

The structured questionnaire included three main sections corresponding to the key variables:

- **Digital CRM:** Measured through scales capturing:
 - Personalization: The degree to which tourists felt the digital content and engagement was tailored to their preferences.
 - Responsiveness: Perception of response time and quality of interactions through digital platforms.
 - Ease of Information Access: The accessibility and reliability of information found on official Manado websites, social media, and digital portals.
- **Informed Tourist:** Measured by scales assessing:
 - Information-Seeking Behaviour: Frequency and depth of information gathered from online sources before travel.
 - Trust in Digital Sources: Confidence in the accuracy and relevance of online information (e.g., reviews, blogs, destination websites).
 - Social Media Engagement: Active engagement, including content sharing and reviewing.
- **Destination Marketing Performance:** Measured using scales on:
 - Satisfaction: Overall satisfaction with Manado's tourism experience.
 - Loyalty: Likelihood of recommending Manado to others.
 - Intent to Revisit: Intention to return to Manado for future travel.

Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating stronger agreement or higher frequency.

The survey, which contained 25 items, was divided into three main sections:

- a. **Digital CRM:** Respondents rated their experience with Manado's digital CRM efforts, which included factors such as:
 - b. Personalization: The degree to which the digital engagement felt tailored to their interests.
 - c. Responsiveness: The timeliness and helpfulness of responses from online platforms.
 - d. Information Accessibility: Ease of finding and using accurate information about Manado through digital channels.
- a) **Informed Tourist:** This section measured respondents' level of engagement with digital information sources:
 - Information-Seeking Behavior: How often respondents actively searched for information related to Manado's attractions, accommodations, and local activities.

- Trust in Online Information: Their trust in the reliability and relevance of online content about Manado.
 - Social Media Engagement: Frequency of their engagement with Manado's online posts, reviews, or user-generated content.
- b) **Destination Marketing Performance:** Respondents rated the impact of their experience on:
- Satisfaction: Overall satisfaction with their Manado experience.
 - Loyalty: Likelihood of recommending Manado to others.
- Revisit Intent: Interest in returning to Manado in the future.
- All items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Data Analysis

The analysis uses Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to test the relationships between digital CRM, informed tourist behaviour, and destination marketing performance for Manado. The CFA results confirmed that all constructs met reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.7$) and validity criteria (Composite Reliability > 0.7 , AVE > 0.5). This supports the robustness of the measurement model for subsequent SEM analysis.

Descriptive Analysis

The sample comprised 400 respondents, with 60% international and 40% domestic tourists. Most respondents (70%) used multiple online sources to gather information on Manado, indicating a high level of engagement with digital content.

4. RESULTS

The SEM results indicate that digital CRM has a positive effect on destination marketing performance for Manado ($\beta = 0.47$, $p < 0.01$). The informed tourist mediates this relationship (indirect effect: $\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that tourists' pre-visit research and online engagement increase the effectiveness of digital CRM efforts.

5. DISCUSSION

Findings confirm that digital CRM positively impacts destination marketing performance in Manado, with informed tourists playing a key role. Tourists familiar with Manado's online content, especially on marine biodiversity and local cultural heritage, were more satisfied with their experiences, as digital CRM enhanced the perceived quality and relevance of information, making the destination more appealing.

Structural Model Results

The SEM analysis revealed that:

- **H1:** digital CRM has a significant positive effect on destination marketing performance ($\beta = 0.47$, $p < 0.01$), supporting Hypothesis 1. This suggests that digital CRM practices, including personalized communication and accessible information, enhance tourists' perceptions and experiences in Manado.
- **H2:** The informed tourist also showed a significant positive impact on destination marketing performance ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.05$), supporting Hypothesis 2. The findings suggest that informed tourists—those who actively gather pre-visit information—are more satisfied and likely to promote Manado.
- **H3:** The informed tourist acts as a partial mediator between digital CRM and destination marketing performance (indirect effect: $\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.05$). This partial mediation suggests that digital CRM's impact on destination performance is enhanced through informed tourists who are better equipped to make informed travel decisions and have higher engagement levels.

6. RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics indicated high levels of digital engagement among respondents, with over 70% reporting that they actively sought out online information about Manado before or during their trip. This suggests that the informed tourist variable is relevant to understanding the digital engagement patterns of Manado's visitors.

Hypothesis Testing Results

The PLS-SEM analysis produced the following results for each hypothesis:

- **H1:** digital CRM positively impacted Manado's destination marketing performance ($\beta = 0.47$, $p < 0.01$). This result suggests that digital CRM practices—such as offering accessible, personalized, and responsive information—enhance tourists' overall satisfaction and likelihood to recommend Manado. The findings emphasize that efficient digital CRM strategies enable Manado to build a stronger brand image and attract satisfied tourists who may contribute to word-of-mouth marketing.
- **H2:** The informed tourist also had a significant positive impact on destination marketing performance ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that well-informed tourists who actively engage with digital sources are more likely to have a positive experience and show loyalty to Manado. The more tourists are equipped with accurate and

valuable pre-visit information, the better they can enjoy Manado's offerings, leading to higher satisfaction and repeat visits.

- **H3:** The informed tourist was found to partially mediate the relationship between digital CRM and destination marketing performance (indirect effect: $\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.05$). This partial mediation suggests that digital CRM's impact on Manado's destination marketing performance is strengthened through informed tourists. Tourists who access accurate, personalized information through digital CRM are more likely to experience higher levels of satisfaction and enjoyment, thus amplifying the positive effects of digital CRM on destination marketing performance.

Data Analysis using PLS-SEM

a) Overview of PLS-SEM

PLS-SEM was chosen for this analysis due to its suitability for complex models with mediation effects and its robustness with smaller sample sizes. PLS-SEM is a variance-based technique, which prioritizes the maximization of explained variance in the endogenous constructs (dependent variables) and is particularly useful for exploratory studies in fields like tourism marketing.

Step-by-Step PLS-SEM Analysis

a. Measurement Model Assessment

The PLS-SEM analysis was conducted in two stages: measurement model assessment and structural model assessment. The measurement model assessment focuses on the reliability and validity of the constructs.

- **Indicator Reliability:** The loading of each item on its respective construct was evaluated. Loadings above 0.70 were considered acceptable, while items with loadings below 0.40 were removed from the model.
- **Internal Consistency Reliability:** Composite Reliability (CR) values were calculated for each construct. Values above 0.70 indicate adequate reliability.
- **Convergent Validity:** The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct was checked, with values above 0.50 indicating that the construct explains more than 50% of the variance in its indicators.
- **Discriminant Validity:** The Fornell-Larcker criterion was used to ensure discriminant validity, ensuring that each construct is distinct from the others. Each construct's AVE was compared with the squared correlations between constructs.

b. Structural Model Assessment

After confirming the reliability and validity of the measurement model, the structural model was analysed to test the hypothesized relationships.

- **Path Coefficients:** Path coefficients (β) were computed to determine the strength and significance of relationships between constructs. Bootstrapping (with 5,000 resamples) was used to test the significance of these path coefficients, where p-values below 0.05 indicate significant relationships.
- **Variance Explained (R^2):** The R^2 values for the endogenous constructs (informed tourist and destination marketing performance) were examined to assess the model's explanatory power. An R^2 value above 0.25 indicates moderate explanatory power.
- **Effect Size (f^2):** The f^2 effect size was calculated to measure the impact of each predictor on the endogenous constructs. Values above 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large effects, respectively.
- **Mediation Analysis:** The mediating effect of the informed tourist was tested using the bootstrapping procedure. The indirect effect of digital CRM on destination marketing performance via informed tourist was computed, and the significance was assessed through bootstrapped confidence intervals.

Results of PLS-SEM Analysis

The PLS-SEM analysis yielded the following results:

- **Direct Effect of digital CRM on Destination Marketing Performance (H1):** The path coefficient was significant ($\beta = 0.47$, $p < 0.01$), supporting H1. This indicates that effective digital CRM practices positively influence tourists' satisfaction and likelihood to recommend Manado.
- **Direct Effect of Informed Tourist on Destination Marketing Performance (H2):** The informed tourist constructs also had a significant effect on destination marketing performance ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.05$), supporting H2. This suggests that tourists who actively engage with digital information sources tend to have a more favourable perception of Manado as a destination.
- **Mediating Effect of Informed Tourist (H3):** The indirect effect of digital CRM on destination marketing performance through informed tourists was significant ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates partial mediation, suggesting that while digital CRM directly influences marketing performance, it is enhanced when tourists are well-informed through digital engagement.

Interpretation of Results

The findings highlight that digital CRM practices are crucial for Manado to improve its attractiveness to tourists, particularly those who value online research and tailored experiences. The mediation by the informed tourist underscores the importance of ensuring accessible and reliable information for tourists before they visit. When tourists are well-informed, they tend to engage more deeply, enjoy their experience, and ultimately advocate for Manado as a destination. This supports the idea that an informed tourist is not only a consumer of destination marketing content but also an amplifier of the destination's appeal through sharing their positive experiences (Aryanto et al., 2020).

7. IMPLICATIONS FOR TOURISM MANAGEMENT

Conclusion

1) Summary of Findings

This study demonstrates that digital CRM positively impacts Manado's destination marketing performance, and that the informed tourist plays a key mediating role. digital CRM practices, including responsive communication, personalized content, and ease of information access, directly improve tourist satisfaction and loyalty. The presence of informed tourists strengthens this relationship, as they are more likely to share positive feedback and recommend Manado as a desirable destination.

2) Practical Implications for Manado's Tourism Management

For tourism stakeholders in Manado, the findings suggest that investing in digital CRM practices is essential to foster engagement and build long-term relationships with visitors. Specific recommendations include:

- a) Personalized Digital Engagement: Develop tailored online content that highlights unique aspects of Manado, such as diving spots, cultural landmarks, and eco-tourism opportunities, which resonate with tourist preferences.
- b) Enhanced Online Information Platforms: Tourism authorities should maintain updated, visually engaging, and comprehensive digital platforms, including interactive websites and active social media channels.
- c) Responsive Customer Service: To enhance tourists' trust and satisfaction, Manado's tourism support teams should provide prompt responses to inquiries on all digital channels.

To leverage these findings, Manado's tourism board and stakeholders should:

- ✓ Invest in Enhanced digital CRM Tools: To attract and retain tourists, efforts should be focused on maintaining responsive, personalized, and accessible digital information channels.
- ✓ Target Digital Content to Informed Tourists: Tourism marketers should develop targeted content, highlight attractions unique to Manado, and partner with influencers to engage potential tourists early in the decision-making process.
- ✓ The study provides evidence that digital CRM contributes to Manado's destination marketing performance, with the informed tourist serving as a mediating factor. This indicates that destination managers should prioritize digital CRM to attract informed tourists, who are pivotal in spreading positive word-of-mouth.

Implications for Practice

- a) For Manado's tourism managers, focusing on digital CRM through targeted online engagement, content personalization, and responsive customer support will likely enhance tourist satisfaction, loyalty, and overall marketing effectiveness. Additionally, by fostering reliable information sources, Manado can further attract informed tourists and elevate its reputation in the tourism market (Umboh & Aryanto., 2023).

Contributions to Digital CRM and Tourism Research

This study contributes to digital CRM literature by demonstrating the mediating role of the informed tourist within destination marketing. Manado serves as an example for other emerging destinations aiming to leverage digital CRM to meet the expectations of today's digital-savvy travelers. This study contributes to digital CRM research by highlighting the mediating role of informed tourists in destination marketing. Future studies could replicate this model in other regions to enhance the generalizability and could also examine additional mediating or moderating variables, such as social media influence or destination image (Aryanto et al., 2023).

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights, its focus on Manado limits the generalizability of findings. Future research could replicate this model in other destinations or compare different tourism markets. Additionally, incorporating qualitative methods, such as interviews with tourists, could further clarify how digital CRM influences tourist decision-making processes

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To present the PLS-SEM analysis findings we add tables 1, 2 and 3 (1) **Measurement Model Evaluation** (reliability and validity for each construct), (2) **Structural Model Results** (path coefficients and significance of hypotheses), and (3) **Mediation Analysis** (to assess the mediating effect of the informed tourist) as follows:

Table 1: Measurement Model Evaluation

Construct	Indicator	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
e-CRM	eCRM1	0.78	0.84	0.88	0.65
	eCRM2	0.80			
	eCRM3	0.83			
Informed Tourist	IT1	0.82	0.85	0.89	0.67
	IT2	0.85			
	IT3	0.78			
Destination Marketing Performance	DMP1	0.81	0.86	0.90	0.68
	DMP2	0.84			
	DMP3	0.82			

Notes: All factor loadings exceed 0.7 indicating good indicator reliability.

Table 2: Structural Model Results

Hypothesis	Path	Path Coefficient (β)	t-Value	p-Value	Result
H1	e-CRM $\rightarrow$ DMP	0.47	6.12	<0.01	Supported
H2	Informed Tourist $\rightarrow$ DMP	0.35	4.67	<0.05	Supported
H3	e-CRM $\rightarrow$ Informed Tourist	0.48	7.01	<0.01	Supported

Note: All path coefficients are significant, with p-values below 0.05 supporting all three hypotheses.

Table 3. Mediation Analysis

Path	Direct Effect (β)	Indirect Effect (β)	Total Effect (β)	Mediation Type	Significance (p-Value)
digital CRM → Informed Tourist → DMP	0.47	0.22	0.69	Partial	<0.05

Note:

The indirect effect of digital CRM on DMP through the informed tourist is significant, indicating partial mediation.

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